

# Preface

**2003 South Dakota Vital Statistics Report: A State and County Comparison of Leading Health Indicators** was prepared by the South Dakota Department of Health.

This report contains state and county leading health indicators for vital statistics. Additionally, health care and resource information is provided at the county and state level.

The report is divided into nine main sections: Overview, Natality, Infant Mortality, Mortality, Induced Abortion, Marriage and Divorce, Communicable Disease, Health Status Profiles, and Health Status Maps. Each section contains written analysis plus tables and figures. There is also a technical notes section which provides additional information regarding the sources of data, data limitations, geographic allocation, populations, rates, and definitions. Reading this section before reading the county profiles may provide the answers to questions in advance.

## **Age Adjusting to the 2000 U.S. Standard**

Age standardization is a practice of adjusting for populations with different age compositions. It is useful when comparing disease outcomes across time, place or population. Prior to 1999, the conventional standard population used for adjustment was the U.S. 1940 standard. Since 1999, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has used and recommended that others use the 2000 U.S. standard.

This switch to the 2000 U.S. standard will prevent the Department of Health and data users from comparing the 2003 data to previous data before 1999 without standardizing it to the 2000 U.S. Standard. However, because the nation as a whole has switched to the 2000 U.S. standard, South Dakota is able to benchmark its data against other states and the nation.

## **Disease Classification**

Since the inception of the Vital Records System in 1905, the Department of Health has used the International Classification of Disease (ICD) to classify underlying causes of death for the state. Continuing advances in disease diagnosis require periodic updates of the ICD. The World Health Organization (WHO) released the update, ICD-10, in 1999. The Department of Health also started using the ICD-10 in 1999. WHO released the previous version, ICD-9, in 1977 and South Dakota began using ICD-9 in 1979.

## **Caution**

**It is extremely important that users of mortality data do not use publications before 1999 issued by the Department of Health to conduct trend analysis.**

Any questions concerning the data, or request for additional statistics, may be directed to the following agency within the South Dakota Department of Health.

Data, Statistics, and Vital Records  
600 East Capitol  
Pierre, SD 57501-2536  
Phone: (605) 773-3361  
Internet: <http://www.state.sd.us/doh/>

For specific information or questions on Communicable Disease contact:

Office of Disease Prevention  
615 East Fourth Street  
Pierre, SD 57501-1700  
Phone: (605) 773-3737

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